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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: TURKEY CONTINUES TO PURSUE BTC SECURITY WITH NEIGHBORS

REF: A. ANKARA 2803

1B. ANKARA 2008

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Despite the recent "First Oil" celebration in Baku, BTC intergovernmental security coordination arrangements are still not complete. Georgia remains the biggest area of concern. Turkey has expressed willingness to facilitate training assistance, but says it has not received any formal requests from its neighbors. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Following May 31 discussions between Senator Hagel's delegation and Minister of Energy Hilmi Guler (septel) which highlighted BTC security coordination issues, Energy Officer followed up with the GOT MFA to assess the status of intergovernmental coordination. (During the Delegation's meeting, Minister Guler said he would welcome comments and recommendations on security from the U.S.) In a June 3 conversation with Energy Officer, an MFA Officer responsible for energy affairs made the following points:

-Georgia has been slow in responding to requests to move forward on implementation of intergovernmental security arrangements as provided for under the BTC agreement (reftels). Following informal consultations between the three BTC countries (a Georgian delegation was received most recently by MFA Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs Uzumcu), the Government of Georgia finally ratified the BTC Security Protocol in late May.

-The next step consists of convening a meeting in Turkey of the three country Joint Committee on Security. Azerbaijan and Turkey have designated their teams, but Georgia has still failed to do so. For Turkey, there will be a team composed of representatives from the TGS, Gendarmerie, MFA, and Ministry of Energy. While the Gendarmerie has the lead for BTC security within Turkey, MFA has the lead for intergovernmental security coordination. Turkey is eager and ready to move forward on security coordination and is hopeful that Georgia will designate a team for a summer meeting.

-Georgia has expressed some interest in security training assistance from Turkey in the past, but has not pursued a formal request, so the officer was not aware of any formal training assistance from Turkish security forces. She believed that the BTC Company had organized training for Georgian security forces.

-Until the Joint Committee on Security convenes, detailed mechanisms for general and border coordination, communication, crisis response, and intelligence sharing have not yet been established. Turkey has readied domestic mechanisms, including oil spill response, which is one area where there has been some coordination between civilian entities in the countries.

-BTC Company has focused on human rights issues. TGS and the Gendarmerie have stated that they do not need any incremental human rights training from outside groups.

-The officer is not aware of any military planning or exercises between the countries. (Note: Caucusus Working Group Turkish Co-Chair MG Cengiz Arslan told PolMilCouns on June 2 that he believed there would be an exercise among the three countries. He undertook to provide a paper on the military aspects of pipeline security to the Joint Staff on June 8 on the margins of TGS Deputy Chief General Basbug's meeting with VCJCS General Pace.)

MOORE